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THE
RULE OF THE TURKS
AT
CONSTANTINOPLE.

A LECTURE

*Delivered in the Hall of the Winchester Mechanics Institute,
On Wednesday, March 7th, 1877,*

BY
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IT has been suggested to me that I should put into print the Lecture I delivered lately at the Mechanics Institute. The only excuse for doing so is the immense importance of the subject of which it treats. Possibly a paper written in a popular style may gain access to some quarters where there is no time for reading weightier publications. It is at any rate in this hope, and not because of any intrinsic value in the paper itself, that I offer it to the notice of my fellow-citizens of Winchester.

W. A. F.

March 12, 1877.

OTHMAN, founder of Ottoman Turks	...	1300—1326
First Descent of Turks on Europe	...	1356
Battle of Kossovo	...	1389
Conquest of Constantinople	...	1453

A. First Period, 1453—1566.

1. Mahommed II...	...	1451—1481
Greek Empire conquered.		
3. Selim I...	...	1512—1520
Conquest of Syria and Egypt.		
4. Suleiman the Magnificent	...	1520—1566
Battle of Mohacz	...	1526
Siege of Vienna	...	1529

B. Second Period, 1566—1774.

Battle of Lepanto	...	1571
2nd Siege of Vienna	...	1683
Treaty of Belgrade	...	1739
Treaty of Kainardji	...	1774

C. Third Period, 1774—1877.

Crimea lost to Turkey	...	1784
Servia lost to Turkey	...	1804—1826
Greek War and Independence	...	1822—1829
Janissaries abolished	...	1826
Treaty of Adrianople	...	1829
Egypt rises under Mehemet Ali	...	1832
Crimean War	...	1853

THE RULE OF THE TURKS AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

ALLOW me to begin with two personal explanations. Though my subject to-night has some bearing on modern politics, the last thing that I desire to do is to treat of any question immediately political. I consider myself pledged by the invitation that was given me to address you to-night, no less than by my own inclination, to avoid any subject that will trench on party politics. No doubt it will be one purpose of this paper to show you that the Turkish Government is hopelessly barbarous, cruel, and corrupt; and to trace the causes of that corruption and decay; but no one has stated this fact more clearly and convincingly than Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury; and, when we have stated this fact, I hope no one will suppose that the Eastern Question is solved, or that its answer is otherwise than replete with difficulty. I certainly do hope, that if I succeed this evening in throwing any fresh light or interest upon the subject of Turkish history, it may deepen your sense of the importance of the Question, and help you to realize the duty that rests on every English citizen to study in every way the conditions of this momentous problem. No problem, I believe, has been submitted to the conscience of Europe for some centuries past which involves such vital principles; none so hopelessly mixed up with side questions of international policies and special national interests; none, upon the rightful decision of which the good name and honour of Europe and of England are more largely risked. Before it, all questions of local or even national administration and reform, which

ordinarily occupy our political minds and kindle our political passions, pale and seem like shadows; this is *the* problem of our age and century. For upwards of four centuries, more and more, first by ignorant neglect, then by petty intrigue, and lastly by still more petty jealousy, we have been bringing this problem closer and closer to our doors; it now is knocking loudly, and calling for an answer, and will not be refused. So far my paper is political; no further.

Another explanation, or rather apology of a personal kind, I have to make. I have no special knowledge of Turkish history or Turkish affairs; and have no doubt that many of you know a great deal more about it than I do. I cannot even pronounce or spell their names—who can? yet, I think, it will be best to assume that you wish me to talk in a plain and popular way about the most simple and notorious facts. The truth is, that the history is so intricate with its endless intrigues, and so monotonous with its dull repetitions of bloodshed and violence, that I believe I shall be doing you the best service if I endeavour to fix your thoughts on two or three leading periods in the history, and two or three leading ideas that are brought out at those periods. Our sensational writers of the present day seem to find stories of crime, of murder, and intrigue acceptable to many readers; if any wish to wallow in such mire, I can confidently commend to their study the history of the Turkish Court, especially at the latter end of the 16th and during the 17th century. To me it is not only repulsive, but simply wearisome, to read of the number of Grand Viziers that were bowstrung or beheaded, the number of royal Brothers that had to be swept off to make the Sultan's throne secure, the number of times in which the clamours of the Janissary troops led to wholesale butchery. I shall pass over such details. Yet it is impossible to speak truly about Turkish history, unless one speaks strongly; and the misfortune is that it is impossible to marshal before you the detestable catalogue of facts, on

which strong statements ought to rest, and in this case I hope do rest. Only do not suppose that I imagine that a short visit I once paid to Constantinople, and to which I shall have occasion to allude perhaps more than once, warrants me in giving any opinion whatever on Turkish character or Turkish government. In such a short visit one is able only to see the very outside of things ; and the outside of Turkish things is always imposing and splendid : it is the inside which is full of ravening and all uncleanness.

The history of Ottoman Rule at Constantinople divides naturally into three great periods. The conquest of Constantinople was in 1453 ; you can easily remember the date, it is exactly 400 years before the Crimean War. The first period covers 113 years, from the conquest in 1453 to the death of Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566. This is the period of real Ottoman greatness ; of great conquest, great extension of power ; a period of great rulers, with mighty wills, and great organizing ability ; a period great in everything, except mercy and justice. During this first period the Ottoman power was, or ought to have been, the terror of Europe ; and when the power culminated in the reign of Suleiman, and after overrunning all the country up to the borders of the Duchy of Austria, and holding all Hungary in subjection, the conqueror laid siege to Vienna, there was no telling that the larger part of central Europe would not fall a prey to his victorious might.

After Suleiman's death in 1566 there was no further fear of such a disaster, though it was long before either Europe or Turkey herself learnt the real measure of Ottoman power. Our second period will extend from Suleiman's death to the peace of Kainardji in 1774, covering, that is, a period of 200 years. During the early part of this period at any rate Turkey had not ceased to appear aggressive and formidable ; and she even made two important acquisitions, Cyprus and Candia. Still we, as we look back upon the period now, can see that after Suleiman's death there was

no real danger of any permanent advance, that as a matter of fact there was a continual recession, and that the germs of internal decay were largely working throughout.

The third period will extend from the peace of Kainardji onwards. During this period the Empire has been gradually breaking up by one loss after another; while her history is not so much a history of Turkish affairs, as of the intrigues of those various European powers which have used her helpless condition to further their own policy and interests. The complexities of Turkish intrigue have been further complicated by intermixture with Russian, Austrian, French, and English intrigue; and the populations of Turkey have been made the sport of foreign powers. As the history of this period is closely involved with questions of modern politics, I shall touch but lightly on it. But I am anxious that you should have sharply distinguished in your minds my three periods:—the first down to 1566, a period of splendour and conquest; the second from 1566 to 1774, a period of failure and increasing rottenness,—at first with some appearance of strength, but at last with acknowledged feebleness; the third a period of dissolution, tempered by the protection of European intrigue.

I am going then presently to ask you to contemplate the Turk at his best, that is, as he is most removed from ourselves. But before I do so, we ought perhaps to ask, who is the Turk, and how did he come to Constantinople? and what did he find when he got there? Now these questions, I am afraid, will lead us into some rather abstruse matters of race; which yet we must go into, because they are very important. Those of us who have any interest in animals, in horses or dogs, or pigeons, or cocks and hens, know the importance of breed; those of us again, who are gardeners, know how much depends on the stock from which our flowers come; we should, therefore, naturally expect that in the case of man, stock or race would make a most important element of character; and so it does. Now the whole of mankind are divided into three

great stocks or races, which come in the following order of civilization: first, the Aryan; second, the Semitic; third, the Turanian. To the first, the Aryan, belong almost all the nations of Europe—English, French, Germans, Italians, Spanish, Russians, Greeks, Slavs, in fact nearly all the nations of Europe except the Hungarians; and beyond the limits of Europe, two nations notably, the Indians and Persians. All the highest civilizations of the world have belonged to this first race. To the second, the Semitic, belong the Jews, the Phœnicians, and the most cultivated representatives of Mahommedanism—the Saracens or Arabic tribes. Now the Turks belong to neither of these races, but to the third and most backward, viz., the Turanian. And this, as I have said, is a most important fact; for the Turks, when they came into Europe, were aliens in race as well as in other points; and the nations they conquered, and which they keep in subjection, were not only of a higher civilization, but of a race born apparently to the capability of a higher civilization. The European nations they conquered, and now hold in subjection, were with one slight exception pure Aryans, consisting of two great families, Greeks and Slavs. The one partial exception is the Bulgarians, who contain a certain small mixture of Turanian blood, but Turanian blood so lost and diluted in the larger mass of Slavonic blood, that for all practical purposes the Bulgarians may be regarded as Aryans, closely akin to the Slavs. The constant jealousy of the Greeks and the Slavs was one of the original causes of the success of the Turks, and is now one of the main difficulties of the Eastern Question. The Greeks form a compact body in the main, towards the south; the Slavs are a more scattered body, comprising in Turkey proper, besides the Bulgarians, the people of Servia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Montenegro; forming no inconsiderable element in the Empire of Austria; and claiming far the largest part in the nationality of the great Empire of Russia. Let me remark parenthetically that on this depends another great difficulty of the Eastern

Question, arising from the interest which Austria and Russia naturally feel in the fate of their Slavonic kinsmen.

Now I want you to pay particular attention to this question of race; for on this the whole matter hinges. It is impossible in Turkey to get any trustworthy statistics; it is the interest of the government to falsify all statistics. But, taking the best estimates which are accessible, it seems probable that, putting aside Servia and Montenegro, there are in European Turkey about four and a half millions of Bulgarian Christians, about two millions of Greeks, about three millions of other tribes, chiefly Albanians and Bosnians, and about two millions of Turks; so that of a total population of nearly twelve millions, perhaps two millions are Turks, and one million more are non-Turkish Mahommedans. That is the Turks are about one-sixth of the whole population. I will recur to this fact presently.

Born then of Turanian blood, kinsmen of the Huns, Tartars, Mongols, and Moguls, the Turks emerged from the steppes of Central Asia east of the Caspian, about the beginning of the 10th century. They first supplied a wave of conquering power, which under the guidance of the great Mahmoud in 1000 A.D. swept over North-west India, and leaves its mighty mark behind it to this day. They next, a little later on, about the middle of the 11th century, appear prominently in those Seljukian Turks, who conquered the Holy Land, and against whom the famous Crusades were directed. These all passed and were gone; and at the end of the 13th century there was some reason to hope that we should not hear much more of any Turks; when suddenly, in 1300, there appears in the hills of central Asia Minor, the founder of a great family and a great power, Othman, the founder of the Ottoman Turks. The Turkish historians attach great importance to the omen contained in the name Othman or Ottoman. It means "bone-breaker": it is the name given to a particularly magnificent kind of vulture. Othman was also called kara, "black," the title given to the blackest and stormiest

of all seas, the Black Sea. There certainly is a lurid omen contained in the name:—*kara Othman*, the dark black Bone-breaker, or royal vulture, the founder of the Ottoman Turks.

The rise of the Ottoman power is in one point very unlike that of most Oriental powers, very unlike that of their own predecessors, *Mahmoud*, or the *Seljuks*. Their advance was at first slow; and therefore they made it sure; they consolidated as they went. They took upwards of 60 years, establishing a firm and permanent hold over the whole of Asia Minor; and ever since that day Asia Minor has been, except where they left it desolate, largely Turkish in blood, religion, and sympathy. Then in 1356 they crossed to Europe. Constantinople was not conquered till 1453. But the larger part of the Slavonic peoples, now composing the Empire of Turkey in Europe—Bulgarians, Servians, Bosnians, had their first crushing blow in the fatal battle of Kossovo in 1389; and Constantinople itself would undoubtedly have fallen long before it did, had it not been for the interruption to the Turkish advance caused by the wild inroad, in 1400, of *Timour* or *Tamerlane*. This delayed the fall of Constantinople for half a century. But when *Mahommed II*, surnamed the Conqueror, came to the throne in 1451, the Turks had completely recovered from this temporary check; and with *Mahommed* commenced that full career of conquest, which continued for nearly 120 years, and which marks with its destructive splendour the first period in the history of the Sublime Porte.

The Turks themselves were fully alive to the importance of the conquest of Constantinople; perhaps they were in some measure awed by the superiority of the civilization they found there, and this may be one reason why they have never mixed with the inhabitants, as they did in Asia Minor. There is at any rate a marked contrast between the character of their conquest in the two countries; and there are two curious indications of the impression produced

upon them by Constantinople. They at once adopted the arms of the city, the crescent moon and star, as the representative of Turkish Mahommedanism; and ever since, the gilded crescent has glittered from the top of every minaret, as the special sign of the Prophet. And more curiously still, as soon as they had robbed the Christians of their superb cathedral of S. Sophia, they at once dropt their own form of mosque, and all their subsequent mosques have been built after the model of S. Sophia. In Cairo there are many most beautiful old mosques, built after the Arabian pattern; but the only great mosque, which has been built in these last centuries, is a base imitation of S. Sophia.

The first 120 years after the conquest are covered by the reigns of four Sultans, Mahommed, Bajazet, Selim, and Suleiman; perhaps, with one exception, the only four Sultans, whose names are worth remembering in the whole of the dreary catalogue. I can at least promise you that only one other shall receive a personal notice in the course of this paper. Certainly three at least of these first four rulers were great in most of the elements of Turkish greatness; they were worthy successors of Othman "the Bone-breaker." The Turkish historians seem to take an especial pride in recording the ingenuity and inventiveness which Mahommed shewed in devising new tortures for his enemies. He began by establishing it as one of the first principles of Ottoman rule at Constantinople, that each new Sultan on succeeding to the throne should put all his brothers to death, in order to avoid disputes; he himself acted on this principle, so more or less did the majority of his successors. However, merciless, barbaric, and outrageous in conduct as Mahommed and Selim were, and even one must add, though with much greater unwillingness, as the great Suleiman himself was at times, these three were unquestionably great warriors. Bajazet was feebler, and only imitated Ottoman deeds so to say at a distance, till at last his own son Selim very properly got rid of him. But it was a time of mighty conquest.

Under Mahommed himself the whole of the country northwards as far as the Danube, up to the walls of Belgrade, and southwards as far as the southern point of Greece, owned the conqueror's sway. The Crimea was also added to the Empire. Under Selim great conquests were made in Upper Asia, on the side of Persia; and Syria and Egypt were permanently annexed. Under Suleiman the Empire was stretched to its extremest limits. Towards the north he conquered Belgrade, overran the whole of Hungary, and in the great battle of Mohacz (A.D. 1526) completely crushed the Hungarian kingdom, and advancing across Austria, laid siege with 200,000 men to Vienna. It was only as by a miracle that Vienna was saved; and during the whole of Suleiman's reign, Eastern Germany was constantly in danger of falling a prey to the Mahommedan conqueror. Towards the south he conquered Rhodes, established a great navy, which ruled the Mediterranean, and claimed the suzerainty at least over all the African states which lie on the South of the Mediterranean, as far as the Straits of Gibraltar. But Suleiman was great in other things besides fratricide and conquest. He was a great organizer and law-giver, and to him is due the powerful system of government, under which the Turks have held their position in Europe so long. He was also a great builder; his mosque at Constantinople is accounted the most splendid building in that superb city. He was a great patron of art and literature; we find one of the most eminent painters of the day, the Italian Bellini, a guest at his court. Certainly among the company of great rulers, who made the first half of the 16th century famous, Charles V the Emperor of Germany, Francis I of France, the Pope Leo X, Henry VIII of England, Suleiman, who was the contemporary and rival of all, was second to none.

Since Suleiman's death, no permanent addition of any importance has ever been made to the Turkish Empire, with the exception of the two islands, Cyprus and Crete; and the frontier began almost immediately to recede, and

the power of the Empire to decline. It is convenient therefore to pause here, and to ask ourselves what was the effect of this Turkish occupation of Europe? and what machinery of government the Ottomans have employed for the purpose of holding their conquests?

You perhaps have often heard it said that the Turks are in Europe as an army of occupation. This sounds like a piece of rhetoric, but as a matter of fact it is strictly true, and no other statement will represent the truth. The Turks came in as alien conquerors, and they have remained such to this day. We have already shewn how they were alien in race; the description I have given has probably made it clear that they were alien in habit and character; they were also alien in religion. The Hungarians, as we have pointed out, were once aliens in race; but they have long since become Europeanized; they have long since learnt the religion, and the manners, and interests, of other European nations. But the Turks are no nearer being Europeans than they were. Such as they were in the days of Mahommed or Suleiman, such they remain still. They are, as we have seen, only two millions out of twelve millions, but they alone form the ruling caste. They have done nothing to amalgamate with the native population; they live on the whole separate from them, in the strong places of the country, the towns and the hills; seldom appearing in the country villages, except to exact tribute or assert their tyrannical predominance; they alone compose the army, and the whole police force of the country. Ordinarily all of them wear arms; no christian or native is allowed under any circumstances to wear arms for his protection, expressly in order that they may not be able to resent the bullying or oppression of the dominant caste. And so the Turks domineer, engaging in no trade, except the slave trade, leaving the tillage of the ground to their subjects, exacting tribute, and holding the country in subjection by their army. They cannot even do the more intelligent part of government by themselves. We are told that the larger

part of the official *work* has always been done by renegade Greeks or Armenians. The license and the intrigues of the Ottoman Court always offered a grand bait to any clever adventurer from foreign lands. Von Hammer tells us that out of the first forty-eight Grand Viziers thirty-six were renegades; that at Turkey's best period under Suleiman at least twelve of her best generals, and four of her greatest admirals, were also renegades. It is needless to say that, while these apostates were some of the ablest, they were also the most unscrupulous and licentious of her rulers. But these are instances of individual apostacy. With the exception* of the Bosnian landlords, who at once deserted Christianity *en masse* and became Mahommedans in order to save their estates, the Turks have made few conversions; and the effect of this Bosnian defection has not been to unite the country, but to alienate the Bosnian landlords from the Bosnian peasants; so that at the present time, while in other parts of Turkey the insurrections that have actually taken place, or are threatened, are insurrections of oppressed populations against the government of the Porte, in Bosnia the difficulty is an agrarian one, it is a rising of the peasants against their landlords, who are not Turks, but Bosnians supported by the Turks.

The successes of the Turks in the 15th and 16th centuries are due to various causes; to the exceptional ability and strength of will displayed by all the successors of Othman for a period of upwards of 200 years; to the excellence of their military appointments and organization, their artillery, siege train, and commissariat, which were all far in advance of the age; to the feuds that were raging between Greeks and Slavs, and between one Slav power and another, and which led some even blindly to welcome the coming of the Turk; to the jealousies of Western European powers, which led the Pope and Naples to encourage Suleiman in his attacks on the power of Venice, which led France, and

* We ought to add the hillmen of Bulgaria, called Pomaks, who were so infamously prominent in the late massacres.

even I am afraid England, to congratulate the conqueror on his successes gained against Charles V of Germany. Let me remark, parenthetically, that now-a-days we may well take to heart the lesson that is to be learnt from these jealousies, and remember what disasters they caused.

But there was one institution, which contributed so largely to the Turkish success, which is so characteristic of the government, and so important throughout the history of the Porte, that we must give it especial notice : I mean, the institution of the Janissaries. This corps, which was the main strength of the Turkish army, was composed of Christian children, who were exacted every year by way of tribute from the subject Christian races, and educated as Mahommedans. Every year 1000 children of Christian parents were torn at the tenderest age from their homes ; and being removed from their native place, and kept carefully in ignorance of it, homeless and isolated from all family ties, trained under the most rigid military discipline, but otherwise encouraged in all license, they grew up to be the most fanatical Mahommedans, terrible alike to the government and to their Christian kinsmen. It is said that when the learned Doctors of the Law were consulted as to the righteousness of instituting this diabolical custom (no act of iniquity was ever committed, till it received the formal sanction of these Scribes and Pharisees of Mahommedan law) they answered in terms, which certainly if uttered by a Christian, would seem to savour of sarcasm : they answered "that it was lawful to take these children ; for that every child is by nature born a Mahommedan, and that it is only by Christian education that it becomes a Christian." This answer was deemed satisfactory ; the Janissaries were enrolled ; and this corps remained one of the most terrible of Turkish institutions, till the government was finally delivered from it just fifty years ago.

At the time this corps of Janissaries was formed of Christian boys, stolen from their homes, slavery was not yet condemned by the conscience of Europe ; but the world has

never seen any form of slavery which, in point of cold-blooded heartlessness, ever approached this device of the Janissaries. Just picture to yourselves the barbarous iniquity. It is all the more necessary that you should do so, because though this actual form of slavery has ceased, Turkey still continues (long after civilization has condemned the practice) to foster and connive at a most enormous slave trade, which goes on now at this very day in all parts of her dominions. I have had lately before me the consular reports on the matter presented last year; and these give unquestionable proof of the prevalence in Turkey of this vile trade. It is even estimated (but the figures are purely conjectural and cannot be vouched for) that apart from Georgians and Circassians, probably 300,000 men, women, and children—and, alas! chiefly women and children—are deported annually from Africa alone for this vile purpose. Our late energetic consul at Smyrna told me, when I was at Smyrna some two years ago, that it had been the constant object of his life to fight against the Turkish slave trade in Smyrna.

The Janissaries, then, was the first arm of defence on which the Turks rested: the second was the learned Doctors of the Law, or Ulema, as they were called, with the Mufti at their head. You must understand that, though the government of the Sultan is generally speaking an unlimited despotism, he himself acknowledges the authority of the Koran (or Mahomedan Bible) and of the law which is founded on the Koran. Thus some Turkish writers assert, though others deny, that his absolute power of life and death is limited to the right of putting seven persons to death per diem without cause. This law of the Koran has to be interpreted by the Mufti; and nothing is ever done without the authority of this chief of the Scribes. But I notice this fact about the decisions of the Mufti; that, while he frequently makes most beautiful decisions about justice in the abstract, (and you may read in Creasy's History a number of such beautiful decisions, which no doubt will gladden your heart,) I find very few instances in which,

when you come to the particular application, the Mufti objected to any act of wrong and tyranny. And there is a very good reason for this weak-kneedness on the part of the Mufti, viz., that he was liable at any moment to be deposed by the Sultan: indeed in one case I find that a refractory Mufti was so deposed, and the new Mufti at once gave a decision that his predecessor should be bowstrung. And I think throughout we may notice this truth about Turkish government; that in theory, on paper, in conception, many things are just and equitable; but that the paper theory has but a faint correspondence with the practical working of it. The true position of the Mufti seems admirably defined by an answer given to one of the early Sultans, when he wished to commit some act of iniquity: "Was this act in accordance with the Koran?" the Mufti was asked; and being a judicious Mufti, and not wishing to be bowstrung, he answered "that he could not find that this act was in accordance with the Koran; but that he found that everything the Sultan did was in accordance with the Koran!"

I have now sketched some of the main features of Turkish government, as we find it at its best. A more perfect system of military despotism the world has never seen; the two pillars of the state, as Mahommed called them, were the Janissaries and the learned Doctors of the Law. But in the period of real Ottoman greatness, there was at any rate this redeeming feature, that whatever oppression and cruelty were practised, were practised on principle. Nothing can exceed the ferocity or vindictiveness of Mohammed or Selim. It is frightful to read of the tortures inflicted on the inhabitants of Cairo and Otranto. Still their ferocity was always on principle; and as long as they were Sultans, none ruled but they. After Suleiman's death in 1566, a wonderful change took place, a change much for the worse. With the exception of the reformer Mahmoud in the present century, hardly a single Sultan has ruled in anything more than name; they have all retired from public

life, and a halo of mystery (not altogether glorious) has surrounded their sacred person. At present no Sultan is ever seen, except at noon on Friday, when he rides from his palace to his mosque to pray. A grim sight truly it is to see the Sultan ride to the mosque on a Friday. He rides forth alone: the road is lined on both sides with troops, with their eyes sternly fixed on the ground; and crowds consisting especially of Turkish women, with their faces all veiled, press round to see him. But no cheers are given; no obeisance is made; he passes to the mosque in silence amid an unmoved crowd; save that this being the one opportunity for the people of access to him, his path as he goes is strewn with petitions for help, which his minister going behind collects, and one may suppose puts in the fire. I may remark parenthetically that I enquired of one Turk who presented a petition, what it was he wanted; and it was soothing to one's pride, to find that the difficulties presented by petition to the Father of the Faithful are much the same as are presented to people of my acquaintance, who are not Fathers of the Faithful; it appeared that this good man wanted some money, because his pig had died. Well, the Sultan passes on, and goes into the mosque alone; there is no priest, not a soul there, except himself, while he remains to pray. An impressive sight it is; and the repression, and isolation, and grim loneliness of it, seem to me eminently suggestive. Well, when the Sultan withdrew, all power passed into the hands of the Grand Viziers (the Prime Ministers or rather sole Ministers of the Turkish Government), or rather it passed into the hands of the Janissaries, who used the Viziers as their executive. Of course it is needless to say that no scruple whatever was felt at getting rid of any Vizier who did not conform to Janissary caprice. From time to time fresh Viziers were put up, and were put down constantly; or, as the Turkish historians express it, were settled with. Consequently, even among the Viziers, with one exception, no name emerges during this second

period of 200 years, which is of any importance whatever. It is on the whole the most hopeless blank in history—a desolation worthy of the Turk; there was no legislation, no improvement; only constant intrigues, constant insurrections of the Janissaries, constant depositions with violence of Grand Viziers, varied from time to time with depositions of the Sultan himself. The only marvel now, as we look back on it, is that the machine managed to hold together through these 200 years. The one Vizier of interest and ability, whose name relieves the monotony of these centuries, seems to have realized in his time (about A.D. 1680) that it was not likely to hold together much longer; and that the one only cure was to revive the policy of Suleiman, and create fresh energy at home by conquest abroad. Once more the Turkish hosts passed across Hungary, and laid siege for a second time to Vienna; but the hopeless collapse of this attempt, and the complete failure of the army, only served to bring home both to Europe and the Turks themselves the consciousness of their own incapacity.

Let us then pass over these 200 years. At the end of it we find the Turks no nearer to assimilating the people, whose lands and whose forts they had seized, than they were before; they are not more at home than they were; only the movement that has taken place generally during this period, and the vast improvement in every other part of Europe, brings into stronger contrast the alien and barbaric character of Turkish occupation.

We find, however, by the end of this period one great change in the external relations of Turkey, which is the key to its history for the last century. In the first period of her greatness, Turkey would not condescend to be bound by any treaties; she would not condescend to *make* treaties on terms of equality with any nation of Europe; they were all her natural enemies. "Is it lawful," the Mufti was asked, "for the Lord of Islam to exterminate the ungodly?" "Yes," the answer was, "he who leagues with the

ungodly (*i.e.*, the non-Mahommedans) is himself ungodly." But in this second period Turkey not only is forced to make treaties, but even consents to accept conditions, at least on terms of equality, from her European neighbours; till at last, in the 18th century, we find a power, newly appeared on the scene, Russia to wit, claiming the duty to watch and protect the rights of those unhappy populations, whom the Turks are oppressing.

In the treaty of Belgrade (A.D. 1739) Russia failed to establish this right. But at last, in 1774, in the Treaty of Kainardji, Russia made good her right; and ever since, she has almost persistently asserted it. Most significant is this Treaty of Kainardji: the great German historian of the Turkish Empire regards this treaty as marking the commencement of the dissolution of the Empire, and he ends his history with the treaty. Listen, please, to one of its main provisions:—"the Sublime Porte promises to protect constantly the Christian religion and its churches, and it also allows the Ministers of the Court of Russia to make upon all occasions representations in favour of the Christians, promising to take such representations into due consideration."

This is the germ of the history of Turkey for the last 100 years; this is what is meant by the independence of the Ottoman Porte. You know our Queen would never make a treaty with France, giving France the right to look after the safety of the people of Hampshire; the people of Hampshire would not want it. But in the treaty of Kainardji, Russia asserted, mercifully for that unhappy people she asserted, the right to look after the safety of the oppressed subjects of the Porte. Henceforth, this people have largely looked to Russia for support; for in those days she was the only power that stood forth to help them.

Then since that time the dissolution has gone on. In 1784 Turkey lost the Crimea; in 1812 Bessarabia and part of Moldavia. Shortly after, Servia asserted practically her independence. Then came a heavier loss;

in 1822, after the frightful massacre of Scio, Greece rose, and the kingdom of Greece was stript from the Empire in 1829. Unhappily this work was left incomplete; not nearly all either of the old historical Greece, or of the Greek nationality was included in the new Greek kingdom; and what was left out is naturally clamouring for admission. Still we English may for once take some pride in this work; for England then, under the noble lead of Canning, joined with Russia in sympathizing with the oppressed Greeks, and in helping them to throw off the yoke of the oppressor. So matters went on. About the same time as Greece won its independence, the Roumanian provinces on the Danube, Wallachia and Moldavia, got pretty well quit of Turkey; France seized Algiers; and Constantinople itself was within an ace of falling into the hands of Russia; indeed there can be little doubt that she might have taken it, when either from magnanimity or from prudence she resigned her prize. These wars were immediately followed by the revolt of Egypt. Mehemet Ali, the dependent ruler of Egypt, seeing the weakness of his master, rebelled, overran the whole of Syria, and had Constantinople within his grasp, when the jealousy of the European powers ordered him to stop. So by the bolstering of European powers the Empire was propped up once more; but Egypt, though still nominally dependent on Turkey, has been practically independent for these last forty years. Then came a grand patching up, under the auspices of the late Napoleon, in the Crimean War. England and France resolved by hook or by crook to keep the thing together. England supplied Turkey with money, which has gone in lining the Bosphorus with superb marble and alabaster palaces, and in purchasing a really fine army and navy to take the place of the Janissaries; gone, I am afraid, so that we at least shall never see the colour of it again: and France being wiser, has supplied Turkey, not with money, but with constitutions of a brand new French type; the only result of which has been to rectify nothing that was wrong before, but to

open yawning wide an unfathomable gulf of corruption. All testimony goes to shew that under these Frenchified constitutions matters are much worse than they were under the rule of the Mufti. Everything is managed from a central bureau, managed by a central clique in Constantinople. This clique is hard pressed for money; consequently every office, ecclesiastical and civil alike, is put up for sale, and the holders take their chance of making what they can out of the subject populations during their tenure, having additional facilities for the most aggravating forms of extortion, since a large part of the taxation is levied in kind, and being stimulated to practise this extortion by the knowledge that their tenure will necessarily be very short, as it is part of the system to change all magistrates frequently, in order to get more frequent purchase money. You will probable hardly believe it, but I can assure you that it is true, that the custom house officers actually refuse to accept the regular legal duty on goods, if they can secure a bribe instead. My own experience in three typical Turkish ports, one of them Constantinople itself, warrants me in asserting that they regard it as less trouble and therefore on the whole distinctly preferable to get dishonest rather than honest gains.

Such I am afraid has been the sole effect of our interposition,—of our money and our constitutions. We have not succeeded in infusing any English energy or French intelligence into the working of the country. The Turks have done nothing to develop its resources. Since Servia gained its independence, its trade has increased by immense strides. Now look at Constantinople. Constantinople is entirely coaled by Newcastle companies; yet it is well known that there are splendid coal fields close at hand, in Bithynia, which the Turk leaves entirely unworked. I was told by some merchants in Constantinople (but I cannot vouch for the truth of the story, though I can vouch for its being believed, as perfectly natural) that these

Newcastle companies had bribed the Turkish bureau to the amount of one million not to work these coal fields: I only thought they might have saved their million. Constantinople has no supply of water; yet there is an excellent supply close at hand. But the bureau will not have any water laid on to the city, because they have sold to certain persons the privilege of walking about with skin bags, and supplying all the water that is wanted from time to time from these water skins. What a condition of things for the Imperial City of the world!

I can hardly imagine any scene more glorious than the sight of Constantinople, as seen from the point of Scutari on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. As one stands in that sacred burial ground, where so many of our brave brothers—aye, and so many of our brave sisters—lie in peace, the city rises from its circle of encompassing waters in surpassing beauty. On the left is the open expanse of the Sea of Marmora, crowned in the distance with the snow-capped heights of Olympus, those grand old hills, decked with their halo of legendary glory: on the right, and beneath one's feet, rushes the broad swift river of the Bosphorus, fringed for miles and miles with continuous city, with mosques and palaces innumerable: stretching far inland from the Bosphorus stream is the famous harbour of the Golden Horn, with its myriad vessels from all the nations of the world: but the central point of interest is the old historic city, rising in successive terraces between the harbour and the sea, with the Seraglio Palace, and the Sublime Porte itself, with the mosque of S. Sophia, and countless domes and minarets, all glistening in the sun.

I cannot hope to convey to you any true impression of that majestic sight; it is matchless in its splendour. Yet pass across the strait, and within those sacred walls, you find everywhere, all around you, squalor and dirt; the city is the home of jackals; I speak literally, not metaphorically; 10,000 jackals, for compliment we call them

dogs, reign supreme in all the central streets, so that you have to thread your way to avoid their filth or their malignity.

Is not this also an allegory? is it not a true picture of Turkish government and Turkish society? There is the same pride of pretension, the same talk of integrity and independence, the same assumption of an imperial position. But the government and the society is diseased and like to die; slavery is like a plague spot festering hardly beneath the surface; bankruptcy marks it with an indelible stigma; while 10,000 jackals in the shape of corruption, intrigue, chicanery, and sensuality, with all their brood, are eating out its vitals.

Meanwhile all the essential and permanent conditions of the difficulty remain as they were. The Turks are still an army of occupation in Europe: they are a minority of two out of twelve millions: they are aliens, and know that they are aliens. They do not believe themselves that they will remain long in Europe. I learnt in Constantinople one very striking proof of this fact. The Turks, like all Orientals, attach great importance to their places of burial; now so firmly convinced are the Turks that Europe is alien ground, that though Constantinople is on the European side of the Bosphorus, the Turks who live in Constantinople, if they can afford it, give orders that at their death their bodies shall be carried back into Asia, and buried on the Asiatic side. And so for miles and miles on the Asiatic side, along the highroad that leads towards the heart of Asia, one sees these weird Turkish tombs, like the gaunt spectres of some retreating army, which has fled to the last "home of the Faithful" on the Asiatic steppes.

If they ever do go, there ought to be, as I hope my paper has shewn you, great rejoicing among all, who can feel stirred by the cause of humanity and justice; there ought to be great rejoicing all over Christendom, at recovering the possessions we have lost; great rejoicing at recovering our glorious cathedral church of S. Sophia.

This Christian building, the earliest, and perhaps the most glorious cathedral in the world, has been, as I have said, confiscated by the Turks, and turned into a Mahommedan mosque; they have daubed the grand old mosaics with whitewash, in order to veil the Christian character of the building; and Christians are now so entirely excluded, that it would be difficult even to obtain admission to the building, if it were not that a bribe of five shillings will secure you in Turkey almost any privilege you desire. But there is a curious irony of fate about our cathedral; it will not look to Mecca; yet according to Mahommedan law it must look to Mecca; and so the whole furniture of the building has been compelled to make a sort of right half-face, and the cathedral itself, in the most ludicrous fashion, made to look awry. Perhaps we may regard this too as symbolical. At any rate it is one of the things we can easily put straight, if ever the Turks do go.

And if they go, what will they leave behind them? I have already told you what the populations are. Of course these populations, after 400 years of subjection, have not much governing power ready developed, or many of the elements of an independent organization. But the Slavs and Bulgarians at any rate have one national institution, which everyone regards as the most hopeful feature in the country. They have a most ancient and most excellent system of village communities, organized under village authorities. The Turks have done nothing to develop this institution; but it has survived in spite of them; indeed they have occasionally used the village machinery as a means of exacting tribute. The great Servian historian gives us a most interesting account of the various village ceremonies which prevail in Servia: it was these village communities which supplied the patriots who some sixty years ago emancipated Servia from the Turkish bondage: we should never forget that the present royal family of Servia, which on the whole has proved worthy of its position, arose two generations ago from plain

Servian peasants. The Bulgarian village governments have also of late given proof of their vitality. Indeed I think they would put some of the towns in our bonny Hampshire to shame. Without any help from the government, in fact in spite of discouragement and difficulty, they have of their own free will, organized and carried out a complete system of compulsory and universal education; and their schools we are told are most promising. In this direction then many people think that the solution of the Eastern Question lies.

But I am once more trenching on modern politics; and both this fact, and the unwarrantable extent to which I have already taxed your patience, warn me to stop.

